REMARKS

The present application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 30, 2003. Claims 1, 3-8, 10-15, 17-22, and 24-50 are presented for examination. Claims 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29-32, 36, 39 are in independent form. Claims 32-50 have been added to provide Applicant with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 2, 9, 16, and 23 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein. Claims 1, 4-8, 10-15, 18-22, and 25-31 have been amended to improve the form of the claims and not in response to the Examiner's rejections. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The Office Action states that Claims 1-5, 8-12, 15-19, 22-26, and 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,092,100 (Berstis et al.); and that Claims 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, and 28 are rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berstis et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,546,388 (Edlund et al.). (Cancellation of Claims 2, 9, 16, and 23 renders their rejections moot.) Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and submits that independent Claims 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29-31, together with the claims dependent therefrom, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

The present application relates generally to determining a particular network resource (or object), based on a signifier entered by a user. From the entered signifier, a single resource/object intended by the user is determined, based at least in part on feedback information stored in a database. The feedback information may be gathered from one or more previous users and processed by a learning system, and is used to determine whether a network resource/object

is likely to be the single resource/object intended by the user. The foregoing technique is applicable to information searching and robot control, for example, but is not limited to those applications.

An aspect of the present application set forth in Claim 1 is directed to a method of finding a single, intended target resource in response to entry by a user of a resource identity signifier. The single, intended target resource is intended by the user to uniquely correspond to the resource identity signifier, among a plurality of resources available on a network that includes a plurality of interconnected computers. The method uses a finder server having access to: (a) a database storing database information including (i) an index of the available resources; and (ii) multi-user feedback gathered from a plurality of users in previous executions of the method; and (b) a learning system structured to access and learn from the database information.

According to the method, a resource identity signifier is received from the user, and the database is accessed to determine, based on the database information including the multi-user feedback, which, if any, of the indexed resources is likely to be the intended target resource.

One of the notable features of Claim 1 is that the method allows a user to find a particular network resource by utilizing feedback from a plurality of previous users. More specifically, the method enables a user to find a particular network resource by entering a resource identity signifier, which need not be a URL and which may be, for example, any of a plurality of aliases that the network resource is associated with, and by utilizing multi-user feedback from a plurality of previous users to determine which network resource is likely to be the particular network resource sought by the user. For example, if the user wants to find the

network resource for the company that makes the game "Super Mario Brothers," but does not know the name of the company, the user may enter "Super Mario Brothers" as the resource identity signifier. Based on the multi-user feedback, it is determined that the user most likely is seeking the network resource for Nintendo. (Another example may be found in the specification at page 29, lines 21-29.) Note that the examples provided herein are intended for illustrative purposes only. The scope of the present invention is not to be limited in any way to the illustrative examples, nor to any details discussed in connection therewith.

By virtue of this feature of the present application, a user is able to find a desired network resource, based on feedback from a plurality of previous users, without knowing its URL and without having to enter any information resembling the URL. The user merely has to enter a resource identity signifier for the desired network resource, and stored feedback information is used to determine the network resource likely to be the desired network resource.

Berstis et al. relates to a system for resolving an incorrect entry of a URL. As understood by Applicant, Berstis et al. teaches that, if a user enters a URL that cannot be recognized, a determination of the correct URL is made based on a "fuzzy" detection scheme. The fuzzy detection scheme truncates the incorrect entry by eliminating characters therefrom, and then compares the truncated entry (i.e., segments of characters from the incorrect entry) with URL entries in a lexicon of server IP names. A match is determined if a URL entry satisfies a predetermined threshold.

Nothing has been found in Berstis et al. that is believed to teach or suggest a method of finding, in response to entry by a user of a resource identity signifier, a single,

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intended target resource intended by the user to uniquely correspond to the resource identity

signifier, among a plurality of resources available on a network comprising a plurality of

interconnected computers, "the method for use on a finder server having access to: (a) a database

storing database information including (i) an index of the available resources; and (ii) multi-user

feedback gathered from a plurality of users in previous executions of the method; and (b) a

learning system structured to access and learn from the database information," wherein the

method includes "receiving a resource identity signifier from the user," and "accessing the

database to determine, based on the database information including the multi-user feedback,

which, if any, of the indexed resources is likely to be the intended target resource," as recited in

Claim 1.

Applicant submits that Berstis et al. is silent regarding the use of feedback

information gathered from a plurality of previous users to determine a single, intended target

resource. Applicant understands the lexicon produced by the Berstis et al. system to be merely a

list of URLs successfully accessed by a single user during a pre-set "history" period. As such, the

Berstis et al. system does not take into account multi-user feedback from a plurality of users, as

claimed.

Further, in order for the Berstis et al. system to operate, a user must enter a

string of characters that resembles the desired URL; otherwise, the fuzzy detection scheme would

not work. As such, in reference to the above example, the fuzzy detection scheme of the Berstis

et al. system would not be able to find the network resource for Nintendo (i.e.,

"www.nintendo.com") based on an entry of the alias "Super Mario Brothers," because the alias

does not include characters that even remotely resemble the correct URL for Nintendo.

Furthermore, one of ordinary skill in the relevant art would find no suggestion in Berstis et al. to modify the system to include the feature of Claim 1 discussed above.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is not anticipated by Berstis et al., and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Independent Claims 8, 15, 22, and 29-32, 36, and 39 include a feature similar to that discussed above, in which a single, desired resource or object is determined based on multi-user feedback gathered from a plurality of previous users. Therefore, those claims also are believed to be patentable for at least the above reasons.

The other claims in the present application depend from one or another of the independent claims discussed above, and therefore are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

The Office Action cites Edlund et al. as teaching "a system and method of metadata search ranking for presenting to an end-user the matching search results of a search in an index list of information wherein a Monitor Agent (component 0205 of Fig. 2) monitors the user's selections of search results. Every time the user selects a search result item for further viewing from the list of results, the Monitor Agent will then update the ranking database (component 0207 of Fig. 2) to increase the popularity count/weight (i.e., the confidence level) of the selected URL accordingly (as in step 408 of Fig. 4) (Edlund, Figs. 2,4, and corresponding

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text, C9: L17-51 and C10L50-67)." Even assuming Edlund et al. discloses what the Office Action asserts that it does (which Applicant does not concede), Edlund et al. would not remedy the deficiencies of Berstis et al. discussed above.

Moreover, Applicant disagrees that one of ordinary skill in the relevant art would be motivated to combine Berstis et al. with Edlund et al., because there is no suggestion in those references to replace the technique of ranking based on a degree of matching of a candidate URL with an inputted URL, as disclosed in Berstis et al., with the technique of ranking based on popularity (or number of clicks on a hyperlink), as disclosed in Edlund et al. In fact, such a modification may thwart the purported operation of the Berstis et al. system. Accordingly, for at least these additional reasons, Applicant submits that the claims of the present application are patentable over Berstis et al. and Edlund et al., considered individually or in combination.[1]
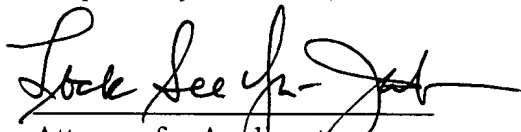
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

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[1] In addition, if necessary in the future, Applicant reserves the right to swear behind Edlund et al. and thus remove it as prior art.

CONCLUSION

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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